

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant responds herein to the Office Action dated January 21, 2005.

Claims 14-20 and 31-32 are pending in the application. Claims 14 and 32 are independent claims.

Claims 14-19 and 32 stand rejected on grounds of anticipation by Hiyama, et. al. (5,379,757), and claims 20 and 31 are stated to be obvious over Hiyama, et. al., in view of Enomoto, et. al. (5,967,969). Reconsideration is requested in view of the amendments to the claims herein and the following remarks.

As generally explained in the introductory pages of the instant specification, for example, at pages 2-5, a shortcoming and a drawback of prior art endoscopic systems is attributable to the fact that it is often necessary to control and adjust a variety of parameters associated with creating, storing, retrieving and displaying an image, and those parameters and adjustments must be tailored not only to the type and combinations of equipment being used, but also to different use conditions and environments. See, in particular, the first few lines on page 5 of the instant specification.

Responding to the drawbacks of the prior art, the present invention, as defined in the independent claims, is directed to an endoscopic imaging system which makes it possible to detachably attach an external unit to the main endoscope unit.

More specifically, in accordance with claim 14, an endoscopic image system includes a signal processor and a plurality of changeable adjusting elements that adjust various properties of a video signal obtained from the signal processor. The external storage unit is detachably attached to the endoscopic imaging system for storing adjustment values to the adjustment elements.

Independent claim 32 has similar features.

With the present invention, great versatility is achieved in being able to freely connect and disconnect various components of the system and to allow an operator to choose and select specific parameters for the creation, storage and replaying of images based on the information that is input into the external storage unit, to thereby control the plurality of adjusting elements within the endoscopic imaging system itself.

Turning to the primary Hiyama, et. al. reference, applicant notes initially that this is a patent issued to the assignee of the present application and that the assignee of the present application is naturally very familiar with its contents. Respectfully, this reference neither anticipates, nor renders obvious, any of the pending claims, regardless of whether this prior art is considered alone or together with the secondary reference being cited.

The primary reference is directed to a method of compressing endoscopic image data to address a specific problem, concerning the issue that the endoscope image data is either ordinary image data, or “dyed image data”. Responsive to this criteria, this reference teaches to compress the data at different rates.

This reference describes employing one or another circuit for carrying out either one type or another type of compression.

Indeed, Hiyama neither discloses nor suggests the concept and technical idea of storing adjustment values for adjusting video signals in a recording medium that is separate from the signal processor per se, as set forth in independent claim 14.

Relative to claim 32, Hiyama neither discloses nor suggests the technical idea of storing adjustment values for adjusting video signals in a recording medium that is separate from the signal processor. This reference further does not disclose or suggest to have a slot in the signal processor for inserting the recording medium therein.

Furthermore, applicant respectfully traverses the assertion in the Office Action that the plurality of adjusting circuits of the present invention are described in this reference and, moreover, the assertion that this reference discloses an external storage unit which itself stores “adjustment values” that could be utilized by the adjusting elements, so that the claimed controller could adjust or modify the settings of the adjusting elements according to the adjustment values entered in the external storage unit by a user.

The Office Action refers the applicant to (alleged) adjusting circuits which are stated to be described at column 42, lines 34-45 and column 68, lines 50-54. The Office Action further refers the applicant to column 16, lines 4-7, lines 11-23, lines 32-34 and lines 41-44. Insofar as the claimed control circuit is concerned, the Office Action directs the applicant to column 34, lines 45-60 and column 16, lines 4-36.

Applicant also respectfully traverses the assertion that the text being referred to in the Office Action discloses the aforementioned elements of the instant invention.

It is noted, preliminarily, that column 10 of the cited reference, beginning at line 9, describes and refers to “discriminating data” supplied by a discriminating means 38 provided within the endoscope controlling apparatus. Typically, this discriminating data may comprise a resistance value corresponding to the unit kind of the electronic scope 2 which may be connected to the overall apparatus. The basic disclosure here conveys to one of ordinary skill in the art, knowledge of developing image data based on the type of unit that is connected with the main endoscope system. It does not convey and teach adjusting elements which adjust properties of the video signal itself. Nor does it convey the sense of the invention of an external storage unit which stores adjustment values for the adjustment elements.

Focusing specifically on the text referenced in the Office Action, column 16, lines 5-45 describe no more than a recording medium on which information is stored and further describes where that recording media may be located relative to the main apparatus.

Column 42, lines 30-54 similarly describe the operation involving choosing the particular compression rate responsive to the discrimination data, i.e., the type of unit connected, as previously described.

Column 68, lines 50-55 merely refer to the ordinary process of white balancing and does not contain any disclosure of the specific features of independent claims 14 and 32, as they relate to the adjusting elements and to the external storage units which contain adjustments and settings for the adjustment elements themselves.

Respectfully, the foregoing remarks and the amendments to the claims clearly underscore the distinctions of the present invention over the cited prior art and the patentability of these claims over the cited prior art.

The remaining claims in the application are all dependent claims which depend from claim 14 and impose further limitations thereon. Inasmuch as the rejection under §103 is dependent on the primary reference which has been demonstrated not to be related to or directed to the invention, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims in the application present patentable subject matter.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the application,
allow the claims as amended and pass this case to issue.

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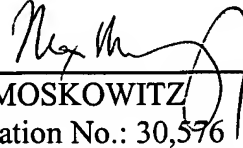
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Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



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